

## Rethinking SLA Data Collection: Dealing with Naturalistic Learners

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The speaker takes the position that current SLA theory construction will be strengthened by the explicit incorporation of core sociolinguistic variables. At present, most theoretical models of SLA imagine the learner as an individual, with cognitive processes that are unaffected by that individual's social group membership or social identity. The reality is that many core elements of current models of SLA – elements such as input, output, feedback and attention – are fundamentally affected by sociolinguistic factors such as interlocutor, social situation, and topic. The speaker presents evidence that such central elements of SLA are fundamentally affected by sociolinguistic factors. Input, output, feedback, and noticing do not exist in a social vacuum. So, for example, the L2 learner's attention to, and ability to notice, differences in speech form are fundamentally affected by the identity of the persons who provide L2 input, as well as the identity of those to whom learner language is directed (Beebe 1980, 1983; Tarone and Liu 1995). Similarly, not everyone's feedback is equally noticeable to the L2 learner; feedback from some people is more highly valued than feedback from others. Sociolinguistics, as a field, has developed a substantial body of detailed quantitative and qualitative research that accounts for such central sociolinguistic dynamics as the interlocutor effect on noticing of language form. As such, it provides a long neglected (cf. Bayley & Preston, 1996), but essential resource that should be drawn upon in future research and theoretical development in SLA.